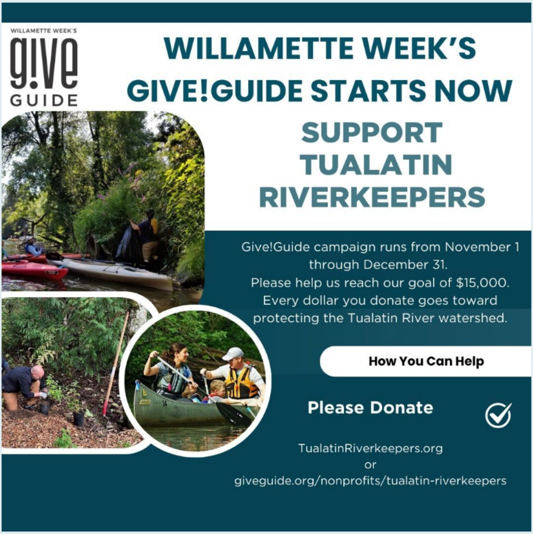
TUALATIN
RIVERKEEPERS®

HeronNow! Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2024

We're Thrilled to Be a Part of the 2024 Willamette Week Give!Guide!


WILLAMETTE WEEK'S
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GUIDE

WILLAMETTE WEEK'S GIVE!GUIDE STARTS NOW

SUPPORT TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS

Give!Guide campaign runs from November 1 through December 31.
Please help us reach our goal of $15,000.
Every dollar you donate goes toward protecting the Tualatin River watershed.

How You Can Help

Please Donate ✓

TualatinRiverkeepers.org
or
giveguide.org/nonprofits/tualatin-riverkeepers

Nov 16, 9:30am
Native Planting at Tualatin Riverkeepers Office

Nov 17, 9am
Fields Bridge Park Restoration Event

We are honored to be included in the 2024 Willamette Week Give!Guide campaign! We're proud to partner with Adventure Without Limits, a Forest Grove-based organization that provides inclusive outdoor adventures for people of all abilities, backgrounds, and ages. Together, we're working to ensure everyone has access to the natural beauty of our region.

Because of donors like you, we've made incredible strides in the following ways:

🌱 **Restoring the River:** We've planted thousands of native species along the Tualatin River, improving wildlife habitats and enhancing water quality.

🚣 **Connecting People to Nature:** We've provided outdoor recreation opportunities through our SUP, kayak, and canoe rentals, allowing more people to experience the river's beauty firsthand.

🛡️ **Advocating for Protection:** We've worked with residents and community partners throughout the watershed to safeguard riparian corridors, forests, and farmland for future generations.

But there's still work to do—and we need your support. When you donate through the Give!Guide, you'll unlock exciting incentives and a chance to win exclusive prizes, including a Central Oregon getaway. Here's what you can earn with your donation:

$25+ contributions

- $5 gift card to Bosky Dell Natives, a West Linn nursery specializing in plants native to the Northwest.

$50+ contributions

- $5 gift card to Bosky Dell Natives
- $10 gift card to NW Cannabis, a premier dispensary off I-5 in Tualatin
- $10 off a 2024 kayak, canoe, or paddleboard rental at TRK's summer rentals in Cook Park (Tigard) or Rood Bridge Park (Hillsboro)

$100+ contributions

- $5 gift card to Bosky Dell Natives
- $20 gift card to NW Cannabis
- $10 off a 2024 watercraft rental
- Choice of an original framed wildlife photo (100+ to choose from!) by renowned Oregon wildlife photographer Jim Cruce

Let's have fun, raise money, protect the Tualatin River Watershed, and do good things together! Will you join us? Please consider donating today.

Give With Give!Guide

Governor Kotek's Urban Growth Expansion Proposal: Controversy Over Farmland, Public Process, and Semiconductor Development

STOP THE SPRAWL
SAVE FARMS
FOOD FARMS NOT DATA FARMS
STOP CORPORATE-GOVERNMENT LAND GRAB
NO!

Photo courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting

On September 17, Governor Kotek declared her intention to bring 373 acres of excellent farmland into Hillsboro's urban growth boundary as part of an application for a semiconductor research site. Under Senate Bill 4, which directs the Oregon Business Development Department to develop a grant and loan program to support businesses applying for financial assistance for semiconductor research, Governor Kotek may override local land use ordinances and designate certain lands to be brought within urban growth boundaries for specified industrial uses.

On October 10, a public hearing was held; unfortunately, the hearing was missing one key individual - Oregon’s governor. TRK has been actively opposing the proposed UGB expansion and commenting on the lack of meaningful public participation opportunities throughout the entire process. We are awaiting a final decision from the Governor, which is expected at any moment. TRK continues to advocate for comprehensive and predictable land use processes that have been crucial in shaping, and protecting, Oregon’s incredible landscape.

Learn More About the Opposition to SB4

Planting for the Future: Volunteers Restore Jackson Bottom Wetlands with 1,500 Native Plants

This month, volunteers have been busy making a lasting impact at Jackson Bottom Wetlands! In two productive planting events, 45 volunteers came together to help restore this important natural habitat, planting over 1,500 native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. These new additions will enhance the wetland ecosystem, providing food and shelter for local wildlife, while also improving the health of the landscape for years to come.

Jackson Bottom Wetlands remains open to visitors year-round, so be sure to stop by the Education Center or explore the many trails that wind through the wetlands. You might even spot a few thousand of the newly planted plants as you enjoy wildlife viewing in this beautiful, restored area.

A special thank you to the City of Hillsboro for their continued support of these volunteer activities, which include three restoration events planned in November. Their partnership helps make these important efforts possible, please watch the events page of our website for opportunities to get involved and volunteer with us.

Join Us!

Exploring the Science of Our Watershed

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November Watershed Science Series Recap: Western Ridge Mussels and Their Role in the Tualatin River Watershed

In November, our Watershed Science Series hosted an insightful presentation by Jack Fetters, an Endangered Species Conservation Biologist with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Jack, who specializes in western freshwater mussel conservation, shared his extensive research on Western Ridge Mussels and their critical role in the Tualatin River Watershed.

As part of the Xerces Society, which is dedicated to protecting invertebrates essential to biodiversity and ecosystem health, Jack's work highlights the often-overlooked yet vital contribution of freshwater mussels to river ecosystems. His talk focused on the importance of these mussels in filtering water, improving water quality, and supporting biodiversity by providing habitats for other species.

The event also emphasized the challenges these mussels face due to habitat degradation and climate change. Jack discussed ongoing conservation efforts and the significant role the Tualatin River plays in the survival of these species.

We're grateful to Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District for sponsoring this informative series and for their continued support of watershed health. Thank you to everyone who joined us to learn more about the fascinating world of freshwater mussels and their importance in maintaining a healthy watershed!

Upcoming Watershed Science Speakers

Remembering Bob Sallinger: A beloved friend, dedicated waterkeeper, and tireless advocate for conservation

Tualatin Riverkeepers mourns the recent death of Willamette Riverkeeper Executive Director Bob Sallinger, a friend and a giant in Oregon conservation. The hundreds of tributes that have poured in over the past week are a testament to how many lives Bob touched and inspired. Bob's work with Tualatin Riverkeepers dates to soon after our founding, when we worked closely with Bob and partners on regional conservation issues. His impact on our state and region flourished in his 30 years with Portland Audubon (now Bird Alliance of Oregon), and we were thrilled to welcome him to the Waterkeeper movement in late 2022 when he was tapped to serve as WRK's Conservation Director.

Bob was a friend, a hero, and a mentor to countless numbers of us in the conservation realm, and we were honored to have him as our guest speaker at February's Annual Member meeting. Bob kindly greeted a number of TRK members after the meeting, many of whom had not known him yet wanted to express their gratitude for his work. And it's this that gives us hope as we honor Bob's legacy. Bob Sallinger has left so many of us better equipped, motivated, and committed to fighting for so many of the causes he spent his incredibly well-lived existence working to protect. We miss you already, Bob, and we're poised to advance your incredible legacy.

Tualatin Riverkeepers: Ensuring Safety Along the River

Visitors enter the new dock at Cathedral Park in Portland on June 29, 2024. The Willamette Riverkeepers is looking to improve water safety by offering new courses next year. *Joni Land / OPB*

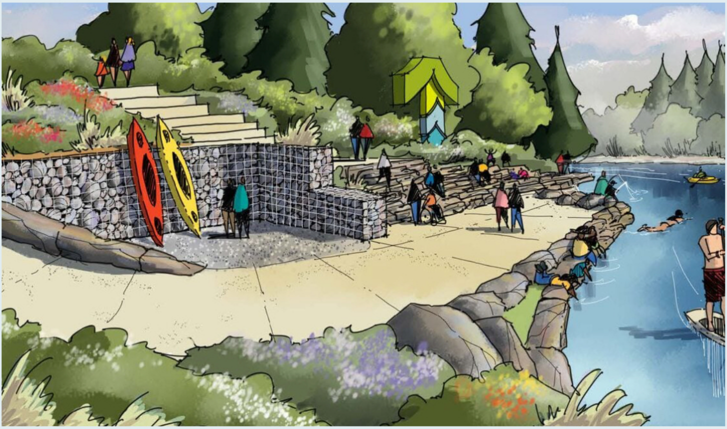
The Tualatin River is a beautiful and vital part of our community, offering many opportunities for outdoor recreation. But ensuring that people can safely enjoy the river is just as important as appreciating its natural beauty. In response to the multiple drownings across Oregon’s rivers in 2024, Tualatin Riverkeepers is intensifying efforts to improve safety and provide essential education for those enjoying the river.

We are grateful to OPB for shining a light on this important topic and including Tualatin Riverkeepers in their coverage. TRK Executive Director Glenn Fee expressed his enthusiasm about the project: "Our goal is not just to get people on the river, but to do so in a way that ensures they feel confident and comfortable. We take the time to educate paddlers about safety, weather conditions, and river navigation so everyone has a positive experience on the water.”

In light of this year’s tragic incidents, Tualatin Riverkeepers is focused on providing safety education, accessible equipment, and guided river experiences to reduce risks. The organization is also working to improve the visibility of safe access points and share crucial information about river conditions. By prioritizing safety alongside the enjoyment of the river, Tualatin Riverkeepers is dedicated to ensuring that everyone can safely experience the Tualatin River. Stay tuned for more information about the life jacket stations along the Tualatin and how you can get involved to help.

Read the Article on OPB

Metro Funding Helps Tualatin Close Trail Gap and Expand River Access



This illustration depicts what the future river access site could look like when the City of Tualatin finishes developing it into a nature park. Acquiring the property was made available with Metro parks and nature bond funds. *Image courtesy of City of Tualatin.*

Tualatin Riverkeepers is excited to see Metro's new funding initiative aimed at closing a critical trail gap and expanding public access to the Tualatin River. This investment is a significant step toward improving outdoor recreation opportunities in the region, providing a safer and more accessible path for visitors to explore the river and surrounding landscapes.

The Metro funding will support a new trail connection in the Tualatin area, filling an important gap between key locations and providing better access for both residents and visitors. The expansion of river access will allow more people to engage with the river's natural beauty and strengthen the community's connection to this vital resource.

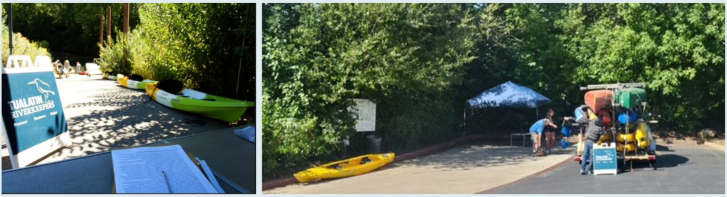
For Tualatin Riverkeepers, this funding aligns with our mission to promote the health and enjoyment of the Tualatin River. It directly supports our efforts to make the river more accessible to everyone, while also ensuring that people can explore it safely and sustainably.

Glenn Fee, Executive Director at Tualatin Riverkeepers, expressed his enthusiasm about the project, saying:

"This investment in trail connectivity and river access is a game-changer for our community. It's an important step in enhancing public access to the river and making it easier for people to experience the natural beauty of the Tualatin River firsthand. We are thrilled to see Metro's commitment to improving our region's outdoor spaces, and we look forward to partnering with them to ensure these spaces are safe, accessible, and sustainable for generations to come."

Read the Entire Oregon Metro Article

A Record-Breaking Rental Season



As we close the book on a remarkable rental season at Tualatin Riverkeepers (TRK), we're excited to share the impact of our River Experiences Program and the many memorable moments we had on the river this year. From canoe rentals to hands-on educational trips, it was a season full of discovery, connection, and growth for our community.

This year, we celebrated a successful rental season with **1,505** rentals at our two locations: Cook Park and Rood Bridge Park. Over the course of 50 days of open rentals, our team had the pleasure of helping hundreds of visitors explore the beauty and serenity of the Tualatin River. Whether it was a family enjoying a quiet afternoon on the water or a group of kids paddling for the first time, every experience was an opportunity to foster a deeper connection with nature and the river that defines our region.

One of the most exciting developments this season was the shift to a new launch area at Cook Family Park, thanks to the City's work on improving the space. While it was a change, it turned out to be a positive one—bringing more visibility and foot traffic to the area. This gave our staff even more chances to engage with people about the river's importance and about the mission of TRK. As one rental staff member put it, "It was great to see people stop by just to chat about the river. Many didn't even realize this place was here, and now they're interested in coming back!"

Our rental staff team of seven, including rental manager Destiny and five returning members from last year, handled the busy season with care and enthusiasm. We also had the pleasure of hosting an intern from CentroCultural at Rood Bridge Park, who helped make our river experiences even more inclusive and welcoming.

Over the course of the season, we facilitated **32** Paddle Experiences, including our popular Discovery Day events. These programs helped to deepen the connection between our visitors and the river, offering everything from lessons about local plants and wildlife to paddling tips for beginners. Among the many highlights were the **14** paddle trips designed for youth groups. These trips brought kids out on the water to experience the river firsthand, often creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Our rental staff went above and beyond this season, not only helping visitors get on the water but also lending a hand when things got tricky. From assisting families as they settled into canoes to helping kayakers navigate through the riffle above Fanno Creek, the staff was always ready to lend a hand and share their love for the river.

We're also proud to announce that we'll be enhancing the river access for future paddlers with the installation of a new dock next spring, improving the overall experience for everyone.

As the season wrapped up, we took the opportunity to gather feedback from our park and launch area users to help guide our efforts moving forward. We asked visitors about the best ways to update our river maps and to create a National Water Trail webpage to help people connect to the river, not just for rentals, but for the wide array of opportunities it offers. The feedback was invaluable, and we're excited to incorporate it into future improvements. You find the results of those surveys on our website.

A big thank you goes out to Clean Water Services, whose generous support helped us provide our brand-new kayaks. These new vessels were a hit with paddlers and added a fresh touch to our rentals.

Looking ahead, we're thrilled to build on the success of this season and continue our work of connecting people to the Tualatin River. We are grateful to everyone who joined us on the water this year and look forward to welcoming you again next season!

Thank you for making this season a success!

Join Us in June for our annual Discovery Day. Watch our website for more information.

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